

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

Annual Subscription: \$3.00

17, ROUTE DE MALAGNOU, GENEVA
297 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK 10

Printed in the U. S. A.

Tel.: GRamercy 5-3475 — Cable Address: "Worcil"

under the auspices of

the WORLD COUNCIL of CHURCHES (in process of formation)
the INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY COUNCIL
the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 2

Sixteenth Year

January 14, 1948

CHINA

Two Leading Chinese Christians on the Task of the Church

Addressing a group of missionaries in Shanghai (December 14, 1948) Dr S.C. Leung, General Secretary of the National Committee of Y.M.C.A.s of China, Vice-President of the International Missionary Council and Chairman of the Hangshow University Board, stressed the necessity for the Church to remain in the "liberated areas" of China, in order to be faithful to the command of Jesus Christ to go into all the world, and not only to the peaceful parts of the world.

"With reference to the question whether it is wise for missionaries to remain in the threatened areas", said Dr Leung, "I feel that I am torn between two selves, the emotional self and the rational self. Purely as a Chinese I would speak emotionally. This is a civil war in China. All the trouble has been created by ourselves and we have no right to expect our foreign friends to stay on and suffer with us. As a Christian, however, I must speak rationally. Whether from the standpoint of idealism or from the standpoint of realism, it is better to have our foreign colleagues to remain with us wherever this is possible. Ideally speaking, the Church is international in character and world wide in scope. It is illogical for us not to prove that we are really an ecumenical Church which transcends nationalities and races. Should this prove to be an embarrassment to the Chinese Church, I feel that we must be prepared to suffer for such a principle. Realistically speaking, the mere absence of foreign missionaries in 'liberated areas' will not convince the new regime that the Chinese Church has had no relationships with the Churches abroad. There is no sense in trying to deceive them on this point. Of course this is a very grave decision that both the Chinese Church and the foreign missionaries are called upon to make. Let us hope that any decision arrived at is made in accordance with God's will. I am sure our Lord is a living one. He will rule and overrule now and forever..."

* * *

A Chinese Christian leader writes from North China (December 13, 1948):

"In Feng Yen, Shansi, four lady missionaries still remain there unmolested. Churches are open and pastors work as usual, receiving salaries. In Mukden which was 'liberated' recently, everything goes on as usual. But preachers are not allowed to receive salaries and schools are not permitted to receive tuition and other fees from students. In Tsi-nan, Shantung, which was taken by the Communists two months ago, both Cheeloo University and its Theological School still function, under grave limitations. They are I understand under financial difficulties both because of very unfavourable exchange rates and because of the difficulty of the sending in of funds.

"Yenching University is determined to remain open and the School of Religion also as long as they are allowed a measure of academic freedom. We are expecting a political change in the very near future. There are hopes that with moderate adjustments we may carry on. We have to rethink Christianity, dissociating the essential things of our faith from Western accretions. We are facing dangers but we are also favoured with great possibilities and opportunities. We must stand firm and bear witness...

"If we succeed in our spiritual adventure, a bridge may be created between Christianity and Communism, between 'The East' and 'The West'. I am neither worried nor anxious, for I have long known that what is happening now must come to pass. Federalism must be overthrown, agrarian reforms must be effected, and the mass of our people must in some way be delivered from other economic distress..."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Russian Orthodox in America

An interesting light is thrown on contrasting attitudes among Russian Orthodox in the U.S.A. towards the authority of the Moscow Patriarchate by Archbishop Makary, Exarch of the Patriarchate for North America, who retains administrative ties with Moscow.

Writing in "The Living Church" (December 12, 1948) Archbishop Makary claims that if the Russian Church in America will submit to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Moscow, "only such orders which are in agreement with the civil laws of the U.S.A. would have an obligatory force for the whole Russian Orthodox Church of North America".

Drawing attention to the fact that the Metropolitan Theophilus (present head of the Russian Church in America) who asserts the autonomy of the Russian Church in America "is to be tried by the highest ecclesiastical court of his Church for canonical insubordination... and for misleading his flock into schism", Archbishop Makary declares: "To the Orthodox faithful this means sectarianism, a departure from ecumenical Orthodoxy, the loss of God's grace through the Church..."

"It is singular", he adds, "that the Orthodox Church in Russia, persecuted for many years, has succeeded in re-embracing all the dissenting church groups and is now unified in her canonical faith. Yet in this country (USA) the sectarian schism is at its height."

It may be recalled that a convocation (sobor) was held in Cleveland in 1946, attended by bishops, clergy and laity of the Russian Church of all parts of North America. The convocation adopted a resolution "asking the Patriarch of Moscow to reunite the Russian Orthodox Church in America within his fold and to conform to be our spiritual father... with the provision that it preserves complete autonomy existing at the present time" (see E.P.S. No. 45, 1946).

In "The Living Church" (October 22, 1948) Ralph Montgomery Arkush, legal adviser to the Russian Church in America, pointed out that this principle (re-affirmation of spiritual loyalty to the Patriarchate but insistence on retention of administrative and legislative autonomy) "was accepted by the Patriarchate in a cable to Metropolitan Theophilus in January 1947 but it has never been confirmed by official edict. On January 10, 1948, news of a patriarchal ukase subjecting the American hierarchy to a church trial in the U.S.S.R. was broadcast by the Moscow radio".

The term "autonomy" has given rise to much controversy. The Metropolitan Council in America stated that the conditions for submission to the Moscow Patriarchate would not preserve the present autonomy and that "the Russian Church demanded of its children who are American citizens, subjective loyalty or an oath of allegiance to the Soviet power".

The editorial of "The Living Church" (December 12, 1948) comments that they have given both sides a chance to be heard but adds: "We cannot refrain from observing that the Moscow Patriarchate itself has published statements that make it difficult for any American to consider this matter temperately and objectively. The Orthodox Conference held in Moscow last summer took a most critical attitude towards the West in general, and America in particular. One statement dealt critically with the Anglican Church...

"But it is not for us to take sides in the controversy. Rather we pray that our Russian Orthodox brethren in America may find the way to peace and harmony in their own ranks..."

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America

Archbishop Mstyslaw Skrypnyk of Winnipeg, Canada, was appointed hierarch of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America at a special convention in Allentown, Pa. (U.S.A.), attended by 125 delegates representing 40,000 members of that Church in the United States.

According to "Religious News Service" (New York), the election of the Canadian prelate was seen as a step toward uniting the diocese of North and South America and the archdiocese of Canada into a single jurisdiction under the supreme authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate at Istanbul.

The election of Archbishop Mstyslaw will be submitted for ratification to Ecumenical Patriarch-elect Athenagoras, formerly Greek Orthodox Archbishop of New York, who will shortly be enthroned in Istanbul. E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAINTowards Unity between Anglican and Free Churches

An announcement issued at Christmas 1948 from Lambeth Palace said that representatives of the Church of England and the Free Churches, who have been discussing the question of unity, have reached provisional agreements over a wide range of beliefs.

The consideration of all points was proceeding in an atmosphere of "deepening intimacy, frankness and mutual understanding". A brief interim report has been agreed upon for submission to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Free Church authorities.

The talks have been held at High Leigh, Hertfordshire, under the alternating chairmanship of the Bishop of Derby, Dr A.E. Rawlinson, and Dr Nathaniel Micklem, Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford. The bearing of the report of the recent Lambeth conference on the problem of unity was discussed and the conference "reaffirmed its conviction that the method of approach to the problem of unity suggested by the Archbishop of Canterbury in his sermon at Cambridge in 1946 (as contrasted with schemes for immediate constitutional re-union) was the right one to pursue in this country". (The Archbishop, in his Cambridge sermon, suggested that the approach to union between the Churches should not be along the line of organic union but by the recovery of a common ministry acceptable to all the Churches, even before organic unity is reached. This would involve the acceptance of episcopacy by the Free Churches as a step towards unity even before that unity is finally secured). E.P.S. Geneva

INDONESIAStatement of Christian Youth Conference

The Christian Youth Conference of Indonesia (see E.P.S. No. 1) which was held during Christmas week in Batavia, consisted both of Dutch and Indonesian delegates. We quote the following essential points from the statement which was issued;

"1. We are obliged to recognise that we are divided on the subject of the military action at present being carried on. The majority of the young Christians present at the Conference feel obliged to protest (against the Government's action), as they can only consider such an action as an attack upon the Indonesian people's desire for freedom, carried out by an abuse of superior strength, a lack of respect for solemn undertakings, and thus the oversetting of justice.

"A minority prefer to abstain from pronouncing judgment.

"A small group consider that this action cannot be judged unlawful, and regard it as the only possible way of bringing about the freedom of Indonesia.

"2. We recognise the relative nature of our views, and leave all judgment to the sole just Judge, before whom the authorities will be called to account. Conscious, however, of our responsibility as Christians in this country, we recognise that the breaking-off of negotiations between the Government

of the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia is an admission likewise of the common guilt of Christians in Indonesia and in the Netherlands...

"3. Finally, we would state that the profound divergences between us regarding the military action which has been taken do not constitute a split in our fellowship in Christ. With Him Who is come to lead us upon the way of peace, we feel ourselves called upon to support all efforts for peace, justice and Christian love, and to battle side by side against all, however full of fine watchwords, which only makes for disunity, injustice and hatred. In practice, this means that we are all called upon to work for the setting up of a sovereign and truly independent State of Indonesia." E.P.S. Geneva

IRAN

Church News

The Near East Christian Council for missionary cooperation in Cairo reports that the Training School for Christian workers held a four month course last summer in Shimran, near Teheran. This school was initiated by the Board of Evangelism of the Evangelical Church with oversight by a committee composed of members of the Teheran Church and station. Some fifteen consecrated men and women of the Church of Iran attended.

Apart from formal studies, there was the training in living and working together as all shared their experiences in the "Christian Way", in witnessing in the nearby village, in assuming responsibility for dining room and other duties, and in fun and fellowship. After a day of prayer and dedication, the students scattered to enter upon their apprenticeship in evangelism in various centres.

The Literacy Campaign is making good progress. On the arrival of Dr Laubach in the spring of 1947, the material was arranged for publication and method presented to His Majesty the Shah, the Minister of Education and others in high government positions, as well as groups of missionaries and members of the Iranian Church.

An Interchurch Youth Conference was also held last summer, in Hamadan. E.P.S. Geneva

CONGO

New Testament in Bwikalebwi

The manuscript has been received in Scotland of the complete New Testament in the Bwikalebwi language, spoken in the Belgian Congo. This Testament has never been printed before, and the National Bible Society of Scotland will put the work in hand without delay. Bwikalebwi is spoken by some 30,000 people who will at last have access to the New Testament in their own language.

"Librairie Evangélique"- Cooperation between evangelical missionary societies in the Congo is of long standing. The latest effort which has come to birth is the "Librairie évangélique du Congo", a central printing press and book room in Leopoldville from which all missionary societies may and do draw supplies of religious, educational and other books and material for the furtherance of their work. E.P.S. Geneva

of the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia is an absolute likelihood of the common guilt of Christians in Indonesia and in the Netherlands...

"2. Finally, we would state that the profound differences between us regarding the missionary action which has been taken do not constitute a split in our fellowship in Christ. With Him who is come to lead us upon the way of peace, we feel ourselves called upon to support all efforts for peace, justice and Christian love, and to battle side by side against all, however evil, line of demarcation, which only makes for dissension, injustice and hatred. In practice, this means that we are all called upon to work for the setting up of a sovereign and truly independent State of Indonesia."

Church News

1948

The West Coast Christian Council for missionary cooperation in Cairo reports that the Training School for Christian workers held a four month course last summer in Sidi Barrani, near Taberna. This school was initiated by the Board of Evangelization of the Evangelical Church with oversight by a committee composed of members of the Lutheran Church and others. Some fifteen evangelists and men and women of the Church in Iran attended.

about four hundred students were in living and working together as all were living in the "Christian Way", in witness and in the happy village, in their activity for living room and other duties, and in fun and fellowship. After a day of prayer and dedication, the students scattered to enter upon their apprenticeship in evangelism in various centers.

The Literacy Campaign is making good progress. On the arrival of Dr. Leback in the spring of 1947, the material was arranged for publication and method presented to his Majesty the King, the Minister of Education and others in high government positions, as well as groups of missionaries and members of the Iranian Church.

An International Youth Conference was held last summer, in Helsinki.

New Testament in Batak-Lepid

1949

The manuscript has been received in Scotland of the complete New Testament in the Batak-Lepid language, spoken in the Belgian Congo. This Testament has never been printed before, and the National Bible Society of Scotland will put the work in hand without delay. Batak-Lepid is spoken by some 30,000 people who will at least have access to the New Testament in their own language.

"Literature Evangelization - Cooperation between evangelists and missionaries in the Congo is of long standing. The latest effort which has come to birth is the 'Literature Evangelization in Congo', a central printing press and book supply of religious, educational and other books and material for the furtherance of their work."

Silver Jubilee of the Russian S.C.M. in Exile

The Russian Student Christian Movement can today look back upon twenty-five years of life. It was in the autumn of 1923 that a meeting was held in Czechoslovakia of representatives of religious groups of Russian refugee students then in existence in Paris, Berlin, Prague, Belgrade, Sofia, Riga and Tallinn, at which the Russian Student Christian Movement was formed. This movement was closely associated with the Orthodox Church. Father S. Chetverikov was appointed to be its chaplain in 1928 by Metropolitan Eulogius of Paris, and until his death in 1947 he devoted all his energies to his work as spiritual leader and counsellor.

"What results has this movement produced?" asks its present director, Archpriest Professor W. Senkovsky, in the January number of "Cerkovnij Vestnik", the monthly organ of the Orthodox Russian Exarchate of Central Europe, which is under the jurisdiction of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.

"Several thousands of young men and girls have been members of the movement since its inception, and have learnt to know themselves to be one for all time with the Orthodox Church. Most of them are now working in the service of the community. Several have studied at the theological institute, and after completing their studies have become priests of the Orthodox Church. Others have taken up secular posts in the service of the Church...

"No less important among the tasks of the movement is its work of inducing in young people the habit of Bible reading and Bible study... For unless we bear free, fearless and resolute witness to our faith, we shall not be able to vanquish the spirit that is abroad at this time." E.P.S.Geneva

U.S.S.R.New Bishop of Lithuania

Archbishop Photius, of the Orthodox Church in the U.S.S.R., who was formerly head of the diocese of Odessa, and who was wrongly reported abroad as having recently died (see E.P.S. No. 42, 1948), has been appointed Bishop of Lithuania and Vilna. E.P.S.Geneva

UNITED STATESUnited Evangelistic Campaign

A United Evangelistic Advance campaign of American Protestant groups during 1949 and 1950 will be carried out under the auspices of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

During a fifteen-month period, beginning on World Communion Sunday in October, 1949, the Federal Council's Department of Evangelism, in cooperation with denominational agencies and local councils of Churches, will carry out an evangelism programme in at least² hundred major American cities. Its objectives are a spiritual quickening of the ministry and membership of the Churches; the reaching and winning of the vast unchurched multitudes for Christ and His Church; careful instruction of new members into the membership of the Church.

E.P.S. Geneva

AFRICAEnquiry into African Marriage Customs

The International Missionary Council is taking part responsibility for an enquiry into African Marriage customs, which is to be carried out under the joint auspices of the I.M.C. and the International African Institute. Roman Catholic missions in Africa, the British Colonial Office, scientific institutes and the School of Oriental and African Studies are represented in the Committee of Management for the African Marriage Survey which has been set up.

African society in the past has depended on the stability of the tribe, and this has been intimately connected with the marriage customs in vogue. Governments are seriously concerned about the disintegration of tribal life following on contact with western civilisation and industrialism. The missions are concerned by the conflict between African custom and tradition and Christian principle. In the past, the tendency has been for missions to insist immediately on the normal Christian standards and practices in relation to marriage; in practice this has been difficult to enforce, and sometimes has had a destructive effect on tribal life. The newer attitude is to consider everything as far as possible from the point of view of the African, to see what can wisely be retained from the ancient customs, and how the transition to Christian ways of life can be effected with the least disturbance and the smallest loss of valuable elements in the old ways of life. It is against this background of thought that the survey of African Marriage customs will be carried on.

E.P.S.Geneva

International Youth Competition

On December 22, 1948, an international jury awarded the prizes for the "Christ and Universal Brotherhood" competition, (which had been organised, for the fifth time, under the auspices of the World Council of Churches and of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, now dissolved. Somethink like 500 young people, from 32 countries in all the 5 continents - many more than in any of the pre-war competitions - had submitted their work.

The first prize in the junior section was won by a fourteen-year-old schoolboy in Hungary, who, like all the other youngsters from 14 to 17, had had to write on "What the Bible has to say on Universal Brotherhood". He stressed the point that "Jesus not only preached the conception of world friendship; He worked too to bring it about by His actions".

A young man of 19, from Lexington, Kentucky, won the first prize in the senior section (18 to 21) with his essay on "As a young Christian, what concrete action should I take today for world peace?" "All Christians, whether young of old", he wrote, "must be heroically devoted to the achievement of peace. Youth especially have known what it is to die for a cause; now must they live for a cause; the cause of peace."

The international jury was composed of 26 persons resident in Geneva, who spoke many different languages, in order that each work might be studied in the original. Various preliminary juries had been set up in several of the countries.

E.P.S.Geneva

